

THE ORGANIST'S STORY.

ONE afternoon last fall, as I was passing the Church of the Evangel on my way home from business, I met Moretown, the organist. Moretown is a stoutish man, with pink cheeks, and a pleasing expression of face, and looks like any thing in the world but a musician.

Mem.—How does it happen that so many eminent violinists, pianists, orchestra conductors, and divine tenors and sopranos, are such lumpy persons to the eye? One would naturally expect to see bare bundles of muscles and nerves, from which all the flesh had been worn off by the fret and tear of musical life.

Moretown was rolling through the gateway of the church, when he saw me and stopped; and, as I came up, languidly reached out his chubby white hand for me to shake.

"Glad to see ye, Jack," said he. "Come in and hear me play."

"Thank you, George," said I, returning his hearty grip, "nothing could give me greater pleasure," which was true, for I admired his playing, and often attended service at the Church of the Evangel to hear him and—well, yes—Dr. Jessamin's sermons, though, perhaps, I ought to be ashamed to say that sometimes the music was the chief attraction for degenerate me. "Alone, George," I asked, "or a choir rehearsal?"

"Alone, Jack, barring the blower, who is now waiting for me inside. I suppose you'll be the whole audience."

"This is delicious. I shall enjoy it greatly." So into the church we went.

We found the blower in the porch seated on the lowest step of the gallery-stairs, looking as if he had just waked up. He was so heavy of aspect, that I at once rated him as a person of great, but possibly neglected musical gifts. Nodding his head at us, he walked up-stairs, knocking his clumsy boots at every step.

"Blower some musical taste, George?" I whispered.

"Don't know one note from another. Spoils a blower to have an ear for music."

"You astonish me. Explain."

"Simple enough. A blower who knows music is apt to forget himself, and stop blowing to hear me. First thing I know, the bellows are empty and the tune dies out with a squeak. Been caught that way two or three times, but, since I got this fellow, feel safe. If the angel Gabriel should sit down to the keys and play the latest music from heaven, Tom would pump away all the same, in dead earnest, as if he were clearing a ship's hold."

I expressed my amazement in an "Ah!" By this time we had reached the organ-loft. I looked about me and marked the holy beauty of the church, which seemed more sacred and solemn in its emptiness and hush than when it was thronged with fashionable worshippers. The sun was yet an hour high, and his slanting beams struck great masses of rich colors from the upper windows and sifted them into the atmosphere of the edifice.

Tom, never saying a word, went to his place behind the organ, and began to get up wind. It sounded like a horse wheezing, and the effect was not bettered by an asthmatic accompaniment from Tom himself. Having been a street-paver previous to his engagement by Moretown, he had acquired the habit of his class of emitting a profound sigh at every stroke.

When George sat down to the instrument and began to play, his whole appearance changed. His face shone, his eyes flashed, his body swayed to and fro with pliant grace, his hands flew like lightning over the keys. I sat silent, and drank in the harmonies while he played for me, in succession, scraps of sonatas from Bach, anthems from Cherubini, dirges from Chopin, crashes from Wagner, fluty plaints from Rossini. It was a wonderful medley, meant to try the resources of the organ, and the skill of the performer in suddenly shifting keys, styles, and expressions. As became a critical but grateful audience of one, I applauded with my thumbs at the end of every fragment. Finally, out of the sweet jargon, there stole the simple, heart-moving air of Schubert's "Wanderer"—the wail of the exile, the dirge of desolation. "My own variations," said George—as he began to weave it all over with the broidery of his fancy. At intervals, the mournful air would reappear on different stops and octaves, and at last George got it down to the deepest bass. As he moved among the profoundest notes, striking out deafening volumes of sound, I observed that, at times, the whole church trembled sympathetically. It seemed to catch a note, multiply it indefinitely, and fondly prolong it. When George stopped to rest, and I had heartily thanked him, said I—

"Please tell me what causes that deep thrill all through the church, when you touch some of those bass keys?"

"I strike the key-note of the church. See, now (blow away, Tom)." He commenced at C C and went down by semitones to C C C, the bottom of the bass. It was thunder of different degrees. I remarked a vibration in the choir, and parts of the building near us, at each successive note; but there was one to which the whole pile responded. I waited till he reascended the octave, and, when he touched the note again, said I, "That's it."

"F sharp. The key-note of the Church of the Evangel."

"Does every building have its key-note?"

"Undoubtedly. This church, for instance, is only a gigantic organ-pipe, pitched on F sharp, octaves and octaves below my lowest. When I touch that note on the deepest bass, a sound is produced loud enough for the church to catch and vibrate to sympathetically."

"A very curious and interesting fact," said I.

"What would you say if I told you every human being has his or her key-note?"

"I should not doubt it, but would like some proofs, if it is all the same to you."

George turned on the music-stool in a very animated manner. "I won't theorize on this singular proposition of mine, but will tell you a true story to illustrate it, if you have twenty minutes to spare."

"The subject interests me. So does your earnest air. I am a bachelor, and will give you all night."

"I also am a bachelor," said George, laughing; "but you shall learn from my narrative whether I am likely to remain one forever."

Here, then, is the story of my friend the organist, with my thick fire of questions and exclamations of astonishment omitted:

Before I came here to be organist and musical director—now four years past—I held that position in the leading church in a smart little town of Western New York.

I claim exclusive control of the church music, and resent meddling with it from rector or assistant, just as he would resent my dictating what sermons he should preach or what hymns read. This is not canon law, I know, but 'tis usage, and I stand up for it. Be good enough to bear this preface in mind—for it contains my justification.

About a year before I moved to the city, the soprano of this rural church died, and I had to find a new one. I knew of a fresh, delicious voice of good compass and power belonging to a young girl, Nelly Beck by name. She was the pupil of a music-teacher, a friend of mine, and strongly recommended to my interest, not only because she sang beautifully, but because her mother was a poor widow and had three other young children. My only objection to her was—she was very handsome. You smile at this. But pretty women sometimes play the mischief in choirs. They flirt with the tenor or bass, or both. I accept your amendment—and the organist. Snug place for flirting, behind these red curtains, I can tell you.

Well, notwithstanding Miss Beck's beauty, I engaged her. She disappointed me agreeably. She studied carefully, was very respectful and obedient to me, and did not flirt. To be frank with you, I began to take a real interest in her. You anticipate me. Yes, I may say, I fell in love with her. Here, said I to myself, is just the musical paragon and pretty woman for you, George Moretown.

I became quite attentive to Miss Beck. Saw her frequently from church—one of the charming prerogatives of the organist everywhere, and particularly in the country. Presented her with quantities of music. Made myself generally agreeable to her, and the tenor a trifle jealous. But she, while accepting my civilities, made no sign of reciprocating my feelings.

Thus things went on a few months—I having no real encouragement from Miss Beck, and hesitating whether to declare myself or not—when the rector secured a new assistant, the Rev. Mr. Hatcher. This gentleman had formerly been assistant in an interior county of the State, and, it was said, owed his new position to his distant relationship to the rector's wife. He had handsome features, fine curling hair, and side whiskers, and often wore a sweet smile which settled grim the next minute. A better reader I never heard. He intoned with the distinctness of a musical instrument. A faithful, industrious man in parochial duties, sincerely religious, I have no doubt. Ladies' society he was extravagantly fond of; and, being a bachelor, soon became a favorite. Perhaps, in such personal and business relations with clergymen as I sustain, I look too much under the cloth at the man. Anyhow, from the first, I did not much fancy Mr. Hatcher.

My main reason, I suppose, was, that he interfered with my music. He had a good ear and some taste, but he could not sing, or play on any thing. Yet he was presumptuous enough to advise me about tunes; and at rehearsals, at which my invited audiences were very limited and select, would drop in on us very much at home. I tried every plan, short of telling him so, to show him I regarded him as an intruder. But he took no hints, and smiled on me as if I had given him a hug instead of the cold shoulder.

Soon I had another cause of uneasiness—call it jealousy, if you will. Mr. Hatcher showed a plain liking for my pretty soprano. To be sure, his intentions were perfectly honorable. His idea seemed to be, so far as I could fathom him, not to find a wife, but to create as strong an interest for himself as possible in all the marriageable ladies of the church. Let me not blame him too much—for this Platonic love-making is almost the only exciting amusement permitted to young clergymen. But one can see that the pastime must be destructive, sometimes, to the peace of the female mind.

Miss Beck was greatly pleased with his courtesies. Many girls in her place wouldn't have resisted the temptation to flirt a little with the minister—the most enticing species of flirtation in the world, the ladies say. But she did nothing worth mentioning to encourage him. I thought it hard that Mr. Hatcher should try to get the better of me in Miss Beck's affections, when he had fifty or more handsome young women at his exclusive disposal down-stairs. It is only a confession of human nature to say, when I saw the assistant so sweet on her, that her value greatly rose in my eyes. I determined to try seriously

to win her love, and also to force Mr. Hatcher back into his proper place. How should I set about the tasks?

I decided to put to the practical test my theory of the *human key-note*.

I will not weary you with an account of the previous experiments (far from satisfactory), which led me up to the adoption of this strange theory, but will only state the general conclusion at which I had arrived. It was this:

That every human being has a key-note, to which that being is responsive according to the development of its musical faculty; and that when a human being's key-note is struck, under the proper conditions, that being's real nature is for the moment laid open, the secrets of the heart come out on the face, and he or she is peculiarly susceptible to influences exerted by the person sounding the note.

Do I make it tolerably clear? Thank you—that speaks well for your attention and discernment. Well, this odd theory I now had a powerful motive for applying to practice, and every opportunity to do so. Here were Miss Beck and the assistant minister at rehearsals; and here was my organ, on which I could strike notes experimentally while they stood near me, and watch the effect upon them. An organ is the only instrument, except the violin, on which my theory could be fairly tried; because it is the only one that gives a steady, prolonged note, capable not only of rousing but of keeping up the sympathetic condition of the person experimented on.

At the next rehearsal both of my subjects were present as usual. Miss Beck looked uncommonly lovely that evening. Large, arch black eyes, a beautifully-rounded forehead, and the peachiest of colors, forever flushing and vanishing from her cheeks—but I won't attempt to describe her, while you sit there grinning at me. Altogether a charming victim for my arts. The assistant minister came out in great force too. He was very lively and captivating, and seemed to me to have struck Miss Beck's key-note on some theory of his own. She was evidently quite interested in him. On me he beamed like a twin-brother. I studied him narrowly, and was confirmed in an old suspicion that his gayety was partly put on, and that beneath it could be found something not quite so childlike. That point I hoped would soon be tested by my theory.

Miss Beck was in charming voice that night. I noticed at times a little tremulousness, caused perhaps by her essaying some new and difficult music. I was glad of this, because I thought she would be more impressive. We executed several new chants and hymns, to the especial satisfaction of the assistant minister, who sat near by, and frequently gazed into the beautiful face of my soprano, beating time complacently with his head, and showering praises on all of us between the pieces. Presently we took a long pause, and Miss Beck came up and stood near me. She wished my opinion on that very difficult subject—the respective merits of three rival pianos. This opened a conversation, which I could easily protract for an indefinite time. As we talked, I pulled the flute stop, and began slowly to touch the keys corresponding to the register of her voice. At the same time I looked her fairly in the eyes, exercising whatever magnetic power I possessed. I tried to keep perfectly cool, though I know I must have been excited, for she visibly recoiled at moments from my ardent gaze. Why did I choose the flute-stop? Because that has a quality answering to the soprano voice. As I ascended the scale I pressed each tone and semitone long enough to try its full effect, doing this with seeming carelessness. With each successive note I would bend my soul—if I may use that expression—to the work of reading hers through her eyes. Her startled look speedily gave way to a dreamy reverie, as she let her eyes rest on mine, while a deeper blush crimsoned her cheeks, and her lips slightly parted. What note was I touching? D, and you may be sure I held on to it.

I had struck her key-note.

She was like one fascinated by an irresistible spell. I too was powerfully affected. The conversation, which we had conducted mechanically for some seconds, ceased; and there we were looking into each other's eyes, fixedly, and D was pealing through the air like an angelic summons.

"What a sharp sound, Mr. Moretown!" It was the voice of the assistant minister—a delicate hint that too much of one note was disagreeable. I turned on my stool, and saw that the contralto, tenor, bass, and Mr. Hatcher, were all looking at us. The note ceased, and the spell was broken.

In some confusion, I turned full to the keys and rattled off the first caprice that occurred to me. Miss Beck left my side, and took up her music-book for the next piece. So exultant was I in the thought that I had proved my original theory, that I might have gone on playing pœans for an hour, if a general fit of coughing among my hearers had not roused me to pursue the rehearsal.

We performed the last piece—a new motet. I remarked that the soprano faltered on the opening bars, as if under the influence of deep emotion. But she soon recovered herself, and sang as smoothly as ever.

The rehearsal over, we all prepared to take our departure. To me, as I have said, had commonly fallen the pleasant responsibility of taking Miss Beck home; and I had looked with some comfort to the walk that sweet summer evening. I had determined to follow up the good effect of my experiment on her.

Mr. Hatcher led the way, bidding us all good-night in the most cheerful manner. As he withdrew he directed a glance of admiration at Miss Beck; but, in the generosity of my heart, I forgave him—for had not I now secured, by an infallible method of my own, the exclusive good opinions of that young lady? Next went forth the bass and the contralto—they were getting up a match, it was whispered. And then—then—the tenor (who I supposed had entirely surrendered Miss Beck to me) tendered his services as an escort. She accepted them, and bade me an indifferent good-night, and off they paired. I was left alone—ah! no! Tom was there, and as he moved around turning out the lights, he looked at me quizzingly, as if he understood perfectly the fix I was in. I should have discharged him on the spot but for his rare gifts as blower.

I strolled out, rather savage, you may believe, and walked a couple of miles out of the way going home, to cool off.

I had proved my theory, perhaps, but had I not lost Miss Beck? There could be no mistaking the effect produced, while I sounded D—but might not every unnatural influence so exercised cause a reaction? Might she not, in pursuance of some profoundly unknown law of the case, contract an aversion for me, except when I could bring her under the dominion of the key-note? I wished I had never tested the theory, but had stuck to the old process of love-making, as handed down to us by our ancestors.

As for the tenor, if he did not mind what he was about, I would discharge him. His voice was reedy, and he had lately taken to absinthe. Really, it was about time he was dismissed.

But Mr. Hatcher, I could not help thinking, was the prime cause of the trouble. He had intruded on my jurisdiction. He had weakened my authority over the singers. He had started what seemed, to the secular eye, very like a flirtation with my soprano; and by the force of example had encouraged the tenor to set up as my rival in her affections. I resolved to take vigorous measures with Mr. Hatcher. And first, to obtain his key-note.

He was present at the next rehearsal. Miss Beck was in attendance as usual, and seemed by her actions desirous of making up lost ground with me. It is not in my nature to resist overtures from a pretty woman—you may smile Jack, but you know you are equally susceptible—and in a minute we were friends as good as ever. The tenor was forgiven, if not forgotten, and so would have been the Rev. Mr. Hatcher, if he had not made himself so exceedingly agreeable to the lady that evening. As I saw him smiling and uttering honeyed words in her ears (I could not hear them, but guessed they were honeyed, from the saccharine expression of his face), the determination to oust him by my new theory possessed me.

An opportunity soon offered for this. At the first pause in the singing, Mr. Hatcher stepped to my side and opened a conversation on the worn-out topic of playing secular music in church. I took what I may call the organists' side of the question—in favor of admitting such music under certain restrictions. Mr. Hatcher, as in duty bound, mildly opposed it. As we conversed, I secured my hold upon his eyes, establishing, after a moment's contest, my magnetic superiority; for his eyes wavered as I looked. At the same time I struck the open diapason, whose tones most nearly resembled those of Mr. Hatcher's voice. Slowly I climbed the scale, dwelling on each note, and more and more searching into the depths of his gray orbs. The look I was conscious of assuming was of one who knew his secret, and could read it through masks of stone. The flickering of his eyes ceased. They became riveted on mine. He turned pale, and beads of sweat started from his brow. I was pressing G sharp. *That was his key-note.*

"What—what is the matter? Are you sick, Mr. Hatcher?"

It was the compassionate voice of Miss Beck, who had seen, with some alarm, from the other side of the key-board, my startling experiment on the assistant minister. I lifted my finger, withdrew my gaze, and Mr. Hatcher shook his head, and started nervously away, like one roused from a horrid dream.

"I—I am not well. I have a bad headache," he murmured, and sat down and looked about confusedly. The tenor brought him a glass of water, and I opened a window to let in more of the fresh evening air. In a few moments Mr. Hatcher was better. Though gratified at the remarkable success of my test, I regretted that the subject had been made ill, and I kindly asked him what piece he would like to have us sing next. He thanked me, and said he would not wait longer, but go home. And this he did, looking so distressed, as he bade us good-night, that I really pitied him.

Our rehearsal over, it pleasantly fell to my part to escort the lovely soprano to her mother's house. Precisely how I gained the information it is not necessary to say; but I was satisfied, before we got to Mrs. Beck's—it took some time to make the journey—that the young lady's key-note had not been struck in vain.

I am almost ashamed to tell you what followed of my experiences with Mr. Hatcher. I plead the weakness of human curiosity, and the desire to have a firmer hold on the assistant minister, in case he continued to intrude on the choir, as my excuses. Having been convinced, by the revelations of the key-note, that Mr. Hatcher had an unpleasant secret in his bosom—and feeling confident, as the police say, there was a woman in the case—I set on foot a cautious inquiry into the gentleman's antecedents. A confidential friend of mine undertook the mission for me. I had heard that Mr. Hatcher had left his former parish, in a county not far away, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, and that the ladies had keenly regretted his departure. Of course; for he was a man, I assure you, of the most engaging manners, and of deep and genuine religious sensibilities. Please understand, again, that I do not deny him the possession of many high and rare qualities.

My friend visited Mr. Hatcher's former parish, and soon made a great discovery. He found, as he had expected, that the clergyman had achieved a remarkable success among the ladies. His fine looks, captivating ways, and emotional nature, had each contributed to make him quite the idol of the pews. Being a bachelor, a construction was put on Mr. Hatcher's attentions to the younger and fairer members of the church, not warranted, I am bound to say, by the facts. If he should be blamed for thoughtlessness in not checking his powers of fascination, those who suffered from them should also be censured for the carelessness with which they allowed themselves to become so deeply interested in him. You see I mean to do Mr. Hatcher justice. I feel that he peculiarly deserves it from me.

One of the young ladies of the parish who had contracted a strong passion for the minister, was named Emma Faye. She was a beautiful girl, an orphan, living with her aunt. Religion, poetry, sentiment, and delicate nerves, all quickened her admiration for him into an overpowering love. She sat in a pew near the chancel, where she could see every movement of her idol—her God almost—at his solemn priestly rites. Mr. Hatcher was quick to detect the emotions, differing from those merely of the devotee, which agitated this lovely creature. What man can blame him for feeling pleased with the exhibition? I, for one, cannot. Her looks were occasionally returned with more of meaning, perhaps, than the minister intended to throw into them. Miss Faye's aunt soon noticed these tokens of sympathy between her niece and Mr. Hatcher, and she aided in the mischief that followed, by inviting him frequently to her house. There, at many interviews, Miss Faye derived the impression, from his kind and sympathetic manner, and from his hastily-uttered words, too, I have no doubt, that her artless love was returned.

Mr. Hatcher soon found himself in an awkward position. His courtesies to Miss Faye had been remarked by everybody, and had caused evident jealousy in others of his admirers. Some hints from discreet matrons of the parish induced him suddenly to cease his visits to the young lady and the manifestation of any special interest in her. He did not reciprocate her attachment, and hoped, perhaps, it would die out. But she took the change in his manner badly to heart. She sickened under it, and was soon confined to her house. Then it fell to the minister to call and see her in her capacity of a sick member of the church—a duty he could not well avoid.

These official calls only made matters worse, adding to the poor girl's passion, increasing the unpleasant gossip of the parish, and making Mr. Hatcher more averse to Miss Faye than ever. At last his situation became very embarrassing. All the facts were known and much exaggerated, and parties formed *pro* and *con*. in the church. By some Mr. Hatcher was greatly censured; by others the whole subject was dismissed with the declaration that Miss Faye was a fool. To escape from the dilemma in which he was placed, the minister suddenly left his parish for the one where I first encountered him, and had never seen his old parishioners nor Emma Faye since.

Such were the facts gathered by my friend. He did not see the unfortunate girl, but he learned that her health was very poor; she was expected to die any day; the country people all said she was broken-hearted. Since Mr. Hatcher had withdrawn from the parish, public feeling had gathered against him, and he was almost universally denounced as thoughtless and careless—one or two said heartless—in his conduct toward the girl.

My friend and myself kept all these facts to ourselves; but I could not resist the temptation to let Mr. Hatcher know that I knew them. Now was my grand opportunity to discomfit him.

Mr. Hatcher had skipped two or three of the rehearsals, and, when we had met, our intercourse had been rather polite than friendly. Meanwhile I had made decided progress in the good graces of Miss Beck, and felt sure that if I proposed I should be accepted, and have her heart into the bargain.

One Saturday night the assistant made his appearance in the choir. To me he was supremely genial, and to the charming soprano more than customarily tender. My heart—I confess it with shame now—turned to steel against him. I no longer scrupled to bare to his gaze my possession of his secret. In an interval he sidled up to the organ, and started a conversation on the merits of Wagner's "*Tannhäuser*" (portions of which he had heard at concerts)—I standing up for the music of the future on general principles of progress, and Mr. Hatcher objecting to it as an unpleasant innovation.

My fingers glided to the keys, and, fixing my eyes vividly upon him, I struck G sharp of the open diapason. The expected effect followed. Increasing pallor, a disturbance of the eyes, a tremulous motion of the body, indicated his response to the key-note.

Suddenly, without withdrawing my gaze from him, I shut up the diapason and whipped out the vox humana and tremolo stops. On these I began to play a most mournful passage from one of Spohr's masses. Under my passionate hands the instrument fairly talked. The tremolo lent its tearful quality to the wail of the vox humana. It was like the cry of a woman—the effect at which I aimed. I never played better in my life, and my feelings were never wrought up to higher pitch. I knew I was trespassing on dangerous ground—the secrets of a human soul.

"Do you recognize it, Mr. Hatcher?" said I.

"No! I do not. Wh—what is it?" he faltered.

"*The dirge of Emma Faye!*" I whispered back, taking care that no one but Mr. Hatcher should hear me.

I would have given any thing the next minute to have recalled the words. The poor man put his hand to his brow, staggered, and would have fallen, had he not caught at a chair for support.

"She is dead, then!" he exclaimed; "Heaven pity me!"

All present heard the words, and started in amazement.

"Oh, no, sir! she is"—I was about to add that she was not dead, and to beg his pardon for thus trifling with his feelings, when he put on his hat, and, with a hasty good-night, fled from the loft. I followed quickly, but, when I reached the open air, he had disappeared.

But the altar-window is darkening, and I will bring my story straight to a close.

And, first, about the unfortunate clergyman. Returning to the loft, I did not dare to tell the witnesses of the scene the causes that led to it; and we all agreed that Mr. Hatcher's mind had become suddenly affected, from parochial overwork, perhaps. Bringing the rehearsal quickly to a close, we went to the rector's house, where Mr. Hatcher lodged, and found he had arrived there, and was then in his room. In response to a message from me, he sent down word that he was not well, and had retired for the night. I could not feel easy till I had confessed my wrong; and so I wrote a note, to be handed to him in the morning, saying that Miss Faye was not dead and asking his pardon for having annoyed him; also assuring him that his secret was safe.

The next day, before the people were fairly astir through the town, Mr. Hatcher had left our parish forever. And now I tax you to guess the two endings of my story—one of which will surprise you, and the other will not.

"I'm not very good at puzzles," I replied—that is, I, the narrator of this story—"but one ending I hope is, that some day you will marry Miss Beck."

George laughed heartily. "Right," said he; "we've been engaged five years. Her mother was bedridden most of that time, and that's the reason we have not married. About four months ago Mrs. Beck died, and I hope to introduce you to Mrs. Moretown, say next June—and you shall hear her sing."

I gave him the grip of congratulation.

"And now for number two?"

"Give it up, George."

"Then prepare to be amazed. The Rev. Mr. Hatcher went from our parish back to his old one, and there he married Emma Faye."

"Good for him," said I.

"Yes, Jack, and good for me, too; for it relieved my mind, like a reprieve from death. The poor girl soon recovered her health, Mr. Hatcher moved West, and is now one of the most popular clergymen in his region."

"Among the ladies?" I asked, innocently.

"Yes, of course; but, since his marriage, that causes no trouble. 'Tis the unmarried parsons that do the mischief. So, you see, from these illustrations, that my key-note theory is not bad to apply in certain cases."

"But, seriously, George, do you believe in it? Perhaps the effects produced could be explained by animal magnetism."

George laughed. "To be serious, then, I think my magnetic power, or whatever we may call it, had something to do with the phenomena. I have made no experiments since. Having secured Nelly Beck, I have no wish to fascinate any other woman, and not the least desire to bewitch a man. Now that you are forewarned, it would be of no use to try on you.—And now what shall I play, my friend, to reward you for your patient listening?"

"Suppé's overture to 'Poet and Peasant,' one of my favorites," I answered.

"Fire away, Tom!" shouted George, to the blower.

Chugh! wheeze! chugh! and the organist dashed into the beautiful overture, and made such music as might not be disdained in Paradise.

When the last rich strains pulsed through the air, the deep purple of coming night filled all the building.

And then we rose and groped our way out of the Church of the Evangel into that other church, whose floor is the whole earth, and whose roof is the starry blue!